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A DAY AT CONEY ISLAND, 1999

Sean Prentiss

The wooden roller coaster serpents
and shudders in late morning.
The old tracks rattle Bones
and me until our necks and backs kink.
She kneads my muscles loose,
and still I know
I shouldn't be in love
with the Cyclone or her for the pains
they've caused over the years.
But they're the oldest:
The Cyclone began in '27.
Bones and I first fell
in love in '89.

We step over diapers
and food cartons
to enter the mid-day salt water
of her home, where the East bleeds
into Lower New York Bay.
We join throngs of lovers
bathing in polluted
waters. Bones floats
on her back
as my hand steadies
from underneath. Her small breasts
and bent knees femur
slight above the waves.

Kosher hot dog vendors
camp on the boardwalk.
I pay \$2.75. The white-capped
cook tongs one from the grill and hands

it to Bones. She lathers
her side in ketchup
mine in spicy mustard.
Dinner. She holds the meal
and we takes bites from either end.

Above ground, the F-Train journeys
from Stillwell Ave. to her Park Slope brownstone.
We shudder past nighttime
fields of Greenwood Cemetery.
With cigarette-stained fingertips, Bones
draws constellations across
rows of marble.
I rest my head
on her slender shoulder
and inhale coaster exhaust,
knishes, sesame seeds, and hotdogs
all scented with sea.
As the car rattles
me to sleep, from her neck
I tongue the day.